

ROUTING

Top Secret 219

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Wednesday 1 March 1978 CG NIDC 78/049C

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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Wednesday, 1 March 1978.

The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.

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INDIA: State Election Results

[Redacted] Former Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's massive electoral victories last Saturday in two important southern states--Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh--mark the beginning of a new phase in Indian politics. This first concrete affirmation of public support for Gandhi since she and the Congress Party were soundly defeated in national elections last March will probably enable her to assume the role of undisputed leader of the opposition. Gandhi will now seek to recruit defectors from the other, now demoralized faction of the Congress Party, and focus on undermining the ruling Janata Party during the remaining four years of its parliamentary term.

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[] The polling in five states and a semiautonomous territory decisively won for Gandhi the bitter fight for control of the Congress Party that had split the party in January. The anti-Gandhi faction, headed by two of her former cabinet members, Brahmanandra Reddy and Y. B. Chavan, was severely beaten in both Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh and failed to win even a plurality in neighboring Maharashtra State where it was thought to have substantial support.

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[] On Sunday, Reddy resigned as president of the faction. Many of his followers are now likely to defect to Gandhi or to the Janata Party, or to declare themselves independents. The Reddy-Chavan faction may not survive the losses.

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[] The electoral returns are still incomplete, but the Janata Party appears to have won pluralities in Maharashtra and in Assam. The latter is one of the three less important areas in the northeast that also held legislative elections. A period of political maneuvering is likely in Maharashtra and Assam while Janata seeks the support needed to form coalition governments.

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[] Janata's disappointment with the voting is tempered by the fact that it had no assured base in any of the states where elections were held. Party leaders had campaigned hard, however, in the hope of gaining a toehold in the south. The party is primarily active in the Hindi-speaking regions of northern India, and Janata leaders want to be able to claim that the party has a nationwide following.

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[] Janata's viability will be constantly tested in coming months by Gandhi, who is still a national figure and the leader of a party with roots in every state. She can be expected to engage in bitter confrontational politics while claiming the role as protector of the economically depressed and socially deprived.

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[] The ruling party's lackluster performance during the past year leaves it vulnerable to attack on many fronts. The opposition's attack may help unite Janata's five constituent parties or, conversely, heighten intraparty tension and further impede the cooperation that is essential to deal with national problems and meet campaign promises.

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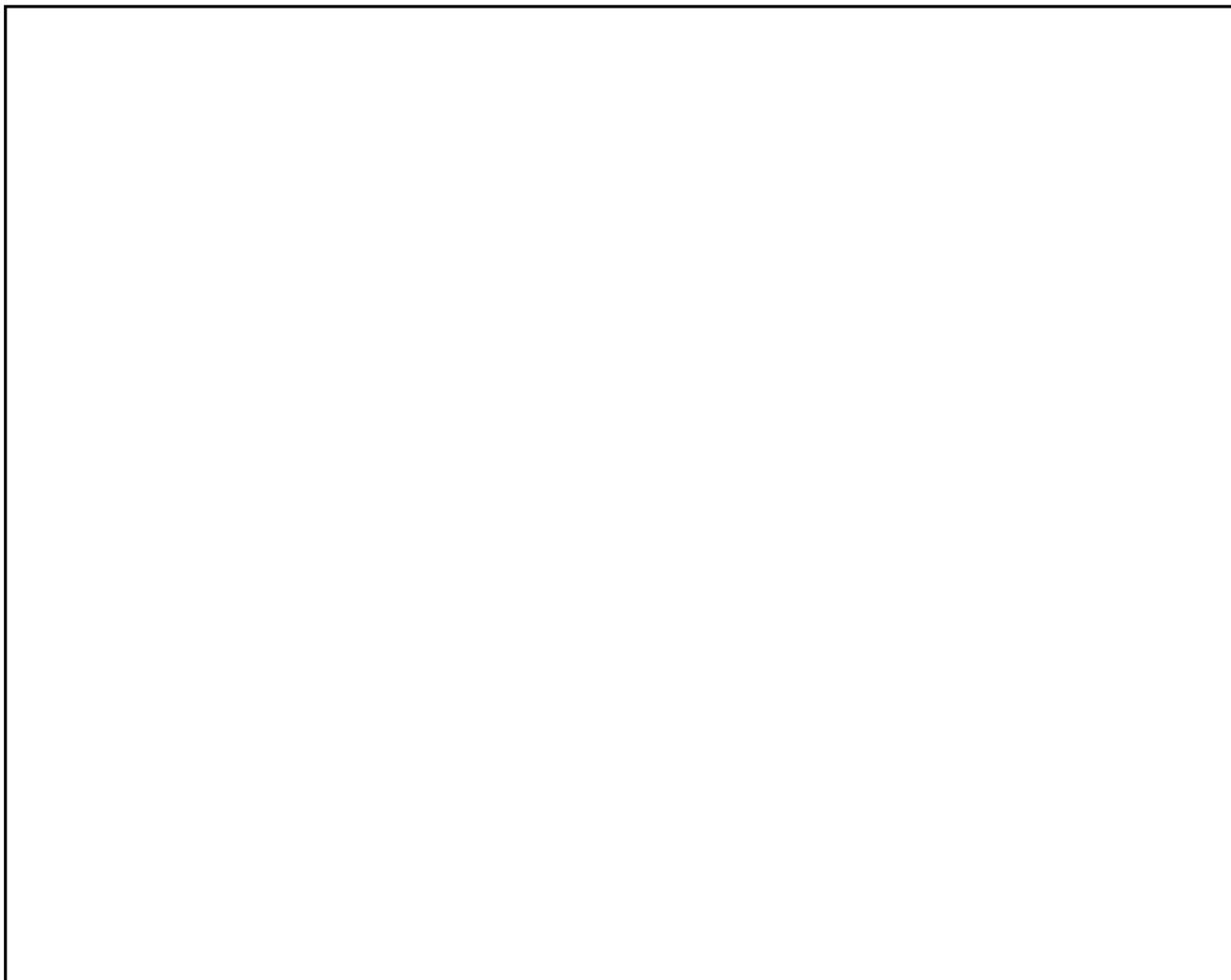
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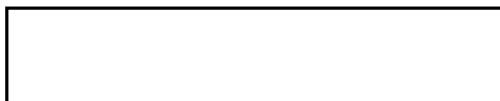
Nicaragua

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 //The Nicaraguan National Guard has brought under control the towns of Masaya and Diriamba--south of the capital--but fresh violence has broken out in Leon, a city north of Managua where a branch of the national university is located. The sporadic rioting is being instigated by the Sandinist National Liberation Front 

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[redacted] The Guard gained control in Masaya by cutting off water, electricity, and food supplies and by using armored cars and heavy road equipment to break down the rioters' barricades. Rioters are still holed up in buildings, and the Guard will move in to capture them if they do not surrender. More violence is expected before the cleanup operation is completed. In Diriamba the Guard killed seven guerrilla leaders during a prolonged shootout. [redacted]

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Peru

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[redacted] Commercial life in Lima returned almost to normal yesterday--the second day of a Peruvian Communist-led general strike that now has all the earmarks of failure.

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[redacted] The refusal by several large non-Communist labor confederations to support the walkout appeared to signal a victory for hard-liners in the military and a sharp setback to leftist efforts to force the government to grant an amnesty for dismissed, imprisoned, and deported workers.

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[redacted] Government security forces broke the back of the strike on Monday when they arrested some 200 participants, including a number of leaders of the Communist General Confederation of Workers. The strikers are expected to face stiff sanctions, including dismissal from their jobs. The government seems to have gained a breathing spell from serious labor agitation that could threaten its present austerity program. [redacted]

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